

PROVERBS AND ECCLESIASTES



From the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are the traditional Old Testament books of wisdom.

Proverbs teaches the difference between good and evil and between wisdom and folly in everyday life. The main emphasis is on the importance of knowing God. Ecclesiastes investigates life as a whole and reaches the conclusion that reverence and devotion to God are essential for making life meaningful.

The translation and format of the New International Version capture the beauty of Hebrew poetry and reproduce as closely as possible the form in which these books were originally written.



*New
International
Version*



Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

FROM THE
*New International
Version*



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Preface

THIS preliminary translation of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes is part of the New International Version of The Holy Bible. In 1973 the NIV New Testament appeared. Since then, work has been continuing on the Old Testament, which is scheduled for publication in 1978.

The New International Version is neither a paraphrase nor a revision of any previous translation, but a new translation made directly from the original languages. In the Old Testament the Masoretic Text (the traditional Hebrew text) has been generally followed, except where the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and other ancient versions, variant manuscript readings and internal evidence have led to corrections in the Masoretic Text.

A transdenominational effort, the New International Version involves over a hundred Biblical scholars from the English-speaking world. All of them are committed to the belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Their aim is to make a translation that is clear and idiomatic, contemporary but not quickly dated, dignified but not stilted. They are therefore seeking simplicity of expression together with sensitive regard for the connotation and sound of the words chosen. Literary stylists work with them in pursuit of this aim.

Where there is uncertainty about the wording of the original text or its precise meaning, footnotes call attention to this. Although sectional headings are inserted in the translation to facilitate reference, they are not an official part of the text. In the translation itself, brackets are occasionally used to indicate words or phrases supplied for clarification.

PREFACE

The Committee on Bible Translation expresses its gratitude to the New York International Bible Society for underwriting the heavy cost of producing the New International Version. The Committee welcomes suggestions and criticisms, which may be sent to the New York International Bible Society at 5 East 48th Street, New York, New York 10017.

Upon request the Society will forward a list of translators and literary consultants associated with the project.

To the praise and glory of God we now offer this portion of the Old Testament of the New International Version.

The Committee on Bible Translation

Proverbs

Proverbs

Prologue: Purpose and Theme

- 1** The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
 ²for attaining wisdom and discipline;
 for understanding words of insight;
 ³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,
 doing what is right and just and fair;
 ⁴for giving prudence to the simple,
 knowledge and discretion to the young—
 ⁵let the wise listen and add to their learning,
 and let the discerning receive guidance—
 ⁶for understanding proverbs and parables,
 the sayings and riddles of the wise.

⁷The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
 knowledge,
 but fools^a despise wisdom and discipline.

Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom

Warning Against Enticement

- ⁸Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
 and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
⁹They will be a garland to grace your head
 and a chain to adorn your neck.

^{a 7} The Hebrew words rendered *fool* in Proverbs, and often elsewhere in the Old Testament, denote one who is morally deficient.

PROVERBS 1:10

- ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
do not give in to them.
¹¹If they say, "Come along with us;
let's lie in wait for someone's blood,
let's waylay some harmless soul;
¹²let's swallow them alive, like the grave,^a
and whole, like those who go down to the pit;
¹³we will get all sorts of valuable things
and fill our houses with plunder;
¹⁴throw in your lot with us,
and we will share a common purse"—
¹⁵my son, do not go along with them,
do not set foot on their paths;
¹⁶for their feet rush into sin,
they are swift to shed blood.
¹⁷How useless to spread a net
in full view of all the birds!
¹⁸These men lie in wait for their own blood;
they waylay only themselves!
¹⁹Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten
gain;
it takes away the lives of those who get it.

Warning Against Rejecting Wisdom

- ²⁰Wisdom calls aloud in the street,
she raises her voice in the public squares;
²¹at the head of the noisy streets^b she cries out,
in the gateways of the city she makes her
speech:
²²"How long will you simple ones^c love your
simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery
and fools hate knowledge?

^a 12 Hebrew *Sheol* ^b 21 Hebrew; Septuagint *on the tops of the walls*

^c 22 The Hebrew word rendered *simple* in Proverbs generally denotes one without moral direction and inclined to evil.

- ²³If you had responded to my rebuke,
I would have poured out my heart to you
and made my thoughts known to you.
- ²⁴But since you rejected me when I called
and no one gave heed when I stretched out my
hand,
- ²⁵since you ignored all my advice
and would not accept my rebuke,
- ²⁶I in turn will laugh at your disaster;
I will mock when calamity overtakes you—
- ²⁷when calamity overtakes you like a storm,
when disaster sweeps over you like a
whirlwind,
when distress and troubles overwhelm you.
- ²⁸“Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me.
- ²⁹Since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD,
- ³⁰since they would not accept my advice
and spurned my rebuke,
- ³¹they will eat the fruit of their ways
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.
- ³²For the waywardness of the simple will kill
them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy
them;
- ³³but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm.”

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

- 2** My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
²turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding,
³and if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,

PROVERBS 2:4

- ⁴and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
⁵then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
⁶For the LORD gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding.
⁷He holds victory in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is
blameless,
⁸for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
⁹Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.
¹⁰For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
¹¹Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.
¹²Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked
men,
from men whose words are perverse,
¹³who leave the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,
¹⁴who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
¹⁵whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.
¹⁶It will save you also from the adulteress,
from the wayward wife with her seductive
words,
¹⁷who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before
God.^a
¹⁸For her house leads down to death

^a 17 Or *covenant of her God*

- and her paths to the spirits of the dead.
¹⁹None who go to her return
 or attain the paths of life.
²⁰Thus you will walk in the ways of good men
 and keep to the paths of the righteous.
²¹For the upright will live in the land,
 and the blameless will remain in it;
²²but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
 and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

Further Benefits of Wisdom

- 3** My son, do not forget my teaching,
 but keep my commands in your heart,
²for they will prolong your life many years
 and bring you prosperity.
³Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
 bind them around your neck,
 write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴Then you will win favor and a good name
 in the sight of God and man.
⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart
 and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶in all your ways acknowledge him,
 and he will make your paths straight.
⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes;
 fear the LORD and shun evil.
⁸This will bring health to your body
 and nourishment to your bones.
⁹Honor the LORD with your wealth,
 with the firstfruits of all your produce;
¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
 and your vats will brim over with new wine.

PROVERBS 3:11

- ¹¹My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
and do not resent his rebuke,
¹²because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
as a father^a the son he delights in.
- ¹³Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,
the man who gains understanding,
¹⁴for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
¹⁵She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.
¹⁶Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
¹⁷Her ways are pleasant ways,
and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸She is a tree of life to those who embrace her;
those who lay hold of her will be blessed.
- ¹⁹By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
²⁰by his knowledge the deeps were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew.
- ²¹My son, preserve sound judgment and
discernment,
do not let them out of your sight;
²²they will be life for you,
an ornament to grace your neck.
²³Then you will go on your way in safety,
and your foot will not stumble;
²⁴when you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
²⁵Have no fear of sudden disaster
or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,
²⁶for the LORD will be your confidence

^a 12 Hebrew; Septuagint and he punishes

and will keep your foot from being snared.

²⁷Do not withhold good from those who deserve it,
when it is in your power to act.

²⁸Do not say to your neighbor,
“Come back later; I’ll give it tomorrow”—
when you now have it with you.

²⁹Do not plot harm against your neighbor,
who lives trustfully near you.

³⁰Do not accuse a man for no reason—
when he has done you no harm.

³¹Do not envy a violent man
or choose any of his ways,

³²for the LORD detests a perverse man
but takes the upright into his confidence.

³³The LORD’s curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the home of the righteous.

³⁴He mocks proud mockers
but gives grace to the humble.

³⁵The wise inherit honor,
but fools he holds up to shame.

Wisdom Is Supreme

4 Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction;
pay attention and gain understanding.

²I give you sound learning,
so do not forsake my teaching.

³When I was a boy in my father’s house,
still tender, and an only child of my mother,

⁴he taught me and said,
“Lay hold of my words with all your heart;
keep my commands and you will live.

⁵Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or swerve from them.

PROVERBS 4:6

⁶Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;
love her, and she will watch over you.

⁷Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom.
Though it cost all you have,^a get
understanding.

⁸Esteem her, and she will exalt you;
embrace her, and she will honor you.

⁹She will set a garland of grace on your head
and present you with a crown of splendor.”

¹⁰Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the years of your life will be many.

¹¹I guide you in the way of wisdom
and lead you along straight paths.

¹²When you walk, your steps will not be
hampered;
when you run, you will not stumble.

¹³Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;
guard it well, for it is your life.

¹⁴Do not set foot on the path of the wicked
or walk in the way of evil men.

¹⁵Avoid it, do not travel on it;
turn from it and go on your way.

¹⁶For they cannot sleep till they do evil;
they are robbed of slumber till they make
someone fall.

¹⁷They eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.

¹⁸The path of the righteous is like the first gleam
of dawn,

shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

¹⁹But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know what makes them stumble.

^a7 Or *Whatever else you get*

- ²⁰My son, pay attention to what I say;
listen closely to my words.
- ²¹Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
- ²²for they are life to those who find them
and health to a man's whole body.
- ²³Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life.
- ²⁴Put away perversity from your mouth;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
- ²⁵Let your eyes look straight ahead,
fix your gaze directly before you.
- ²⁶Make level^a paths for your feet
and take only ways that are firm.
- ²⁷Do not swerve to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.

Warning Against Adultery

- 5** My son, pay attention to my wisdom,
listen well to my words of insight,
²that you may maintain discretion
and your lips may preserve knowledge.
- ³For the lips of an adulteress drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
⁴but in the end she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
- ⁵Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.^b
- ⁶She gives no thought to the way of life;
her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.
- ⁷Now then, my sons, listen to me;
do not turn aside from what I say.
- ⁸Keep to a path far from her,
do not go near the door of her house,

^a 26 Or Consider the

^b 5 Hebrew Sheol

PROVERBS 5:9

- ⁹lest you give your best strength to others
and your years to one who is cruel,
¹⁰lest strangers feast on your wealth
and your toil enrich another man's house.
¹¹At the end of your life you will groan,
when your flesh and body are spent.
¹²You will say, "How I hated discipline!
How my heart spurned correction!
¹³I would not obey my teachers
or listen to my instructors.
¹⁴I have come to the brink of utter ruin
in the midst of the whole assembly."
- ¹⁵Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.
¹⁶Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public
squares?
¹⁷Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.
¹⁸May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your
youth.
¹⁹A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be captivated by her love.
²⁰Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress?
Why embrace the bosom of another man's
wife?
- ²¹For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD,
and he examines all his paths.
²²The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him;
the cords of his sin hold him fast.
²³He will die for lack of discipline,
led astray by his own great folly.

Warnings Against Folly

- 6** My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor,
 if you have struck hands in pledge for another,
²if you have been trapped by what you said,
 ensnared by the words of your mouth,
³then do this, my son, to free yourself,
 since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands:
 Go and humble yourself;
 press your plea with your neighbor!
⁴Allow no sleep to your eyes,
 no slumber to your eyelids.
⁵Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,
 like a bird from the snare of the fowler.
- ⁶Go to the ant, you sluggard;
 consider its ways and be wise!
⁷It has no commander,
 no overseer or ruler,
⁸yet it stores its provisions in summer
 and gathers its food at harvest.
- ⁹How long will you lie there, you sluggard?
 When will you get up from your sleep?
¹⁰A little sleep, a little slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to rest—
¹¹and poverty will come on you like a bandit
 and scarcity like an armed man.^a
- ¹²A scoundrel and villain,
 who goes about with a corrupt mouth,
¹³who winks with his eye,
 signals with his feet

^a 11 Or like a vagrant / and scarcity like a beggar

and motions with his fingers,
14 who plots evil with deceit in his heart—
he always stirs up dissension.
15 Therefore in an instant disaster will overtake
him;
he will suddenly be destroyed—without
remedy.

16 There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
17 haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
19 a false witness who pours out lies
and a man who stirs up dissension among
brothers.

Warning Against Adultery

20 My son, keep your father's commands
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
21 Bind them upon your heart forever;
fasten them around your neck.
22 When you walk, they will guide you;
when you sleep, they will watch over you;
when you awake, they will speak to you.
23 For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is
a light,
and the corrections of discipline are the way to
life,
24 keeping you from the immoral woman,
from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.
25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes,
26 for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread,
and the adulteress preys upon your very life.

- ²⁷Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?
²⁸Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?
²⁹So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.
³⁰Men do not despise a thief if he steals
to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.
³¹Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold,
though it costs him all the wealth of his house.
³²But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment;
whoever does so destroys himself.
³³Blows and disgrace are his lot,
and his shame will never be wiped away;
³⁴for jealousy arouses a husband's fury,
and he will show no mercy when he takes
revenge.
³⁵He will not accept any compensation;
he will refuse the bribe, however great it is.

Warning Against the Adulteress

- 7** My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.
²Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.
³Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call understanding your kinsman;
⁵they will keep you from the adulteress,
from the wayward wife with her seductive
words.
⁶At the window of my house
I looked out through the lattice.
⁷I saw among the simple,

I noticed among the young men,
a youth who lacked judgment.

⁸He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house
⁹at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.

¹⁰Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.

¹¹(She is loud and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;
¹²now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)

¹³She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:

¹⁴"I have peace offerings at home;
today I fulfilled my vows.

¹⁵So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!

¹⁶I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.

¹⁷I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

¹⁸Come, let's drink deep of love till morning;
let's enjoy ourselves with love!

¹⁹My husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.

²⁰He took his purse filled with money
and will not be home till full moon."

²¹With persuasive words she led him astray;
she seduced him with her smooth talk.

²²All at once he followed her
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer^a stepping into a noose^b

^a 22 Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew *fool*
this line is uncertain.

^b 22 The meaning of the Hebrew of

- ²³ till an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare,
little knowing it will cost him his life.
- ²⁴ Now then, my sons, listen to me;
pay attention to what I say.
- ²⁵ Do not let your heart turn to her ways
or stray into her paths.
- ²⁶ Many are the victims she has brought down;
her slain are a mighty throng.
- ²⁷ Her house is a highway to the grave,^a
leading down to the chambers of death.

Wisdom's Appeal

- 8** Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?
- ² On the heights along the way,
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
³ beside the gates leading into the city,
at the entrances, she cries aloud:
- ⁴ "To you, O men, I call out;
I raise my voice to all mankind.
- ⁵ You who are simple, gain prudence;
you who are foolish, gain understanding.
- ⁶ Listen, for I have worthy things to say;
I open my lips to speak what is right.
- ⁷ My mouth speaks what is true,
for my lips detest wickedness.
- ⁸ All the words of my mouth are just;
none of them is crooked or perverse.
- ⁹ To the discerning all of them are right;
they are faultless to those who have
knowledge.
- ¹⁰ Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,

^a 27 Hebrew *Sheol*

PROVERBS 8:11

¹¹for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.

¹²"I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion.

¹³To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.

¹⁴Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have understanding and power.

¹⁵By me kings reign
and rulers make laws that are just;

¹⁶by me princes govern,
and all nobles who rule on earth.^a

¹⁷I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me.

¹⁸With me are riches and honor,
enduring wealth and prosperity.

¹⁹My fruit is better than fine gold;
what I yield surpasses choice silver.

²⁰I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,

²¹bestowing wealth on those who love me
and making their treasuries full.

²²"The LORD possessed me^b at the beginning of his
work,^c

before his deeds of old;

²³I was appointed^d from eternity,
from the beginning, before the world began.

²⁴When there were no oceans, I was given birth,
when there were no springs abounding with
water;

²⁵before the mountains were settled in place,

^a 16 Many Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; other Hebrew manuscripts *all righteous rulers* ^b 22 Or *The LORD brought me forth* ^c 22 Or *way*; or *dominion*

^d 23 Or *fashioned*

- before the hills, I was given birth,
²⁶before he made the earth or its fields
 or any of the dust of the world.
²⁷I was there when he set the heavens in place,
 when he marked out the horizon on the face
 of the deep,
²⁸when he established the clouds above
 and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
²⁹when he gave the sea its boundary
 so the waters would not overstep his
 command,
 and when he marked out the foundations of the
 earth.
³⁰ Then I was the craftsman at his side.
 I was filled with delight day after day,
 rejoicing always in his presence,
³¹rejoicing in his whole world
 and delighting in mankind.
³²“Now then, my sons, listen to me;
 blessed are those who keep my ways.
³³Listen to my instruction and be wise;
 do not ignore it.
³⁴Blessed is the man who listens to me,
 watching daily at my doors,
 waiting at my doorway.
³⁵For whoever finds me finds life
 and receives favor from the LORD.
³⁶But whoever fails to find me harms himself;
 all who hate me love death.”

Invitations of Wisdom and of Folly

- 9** Wisdom has built her house;
 she has hewn out its seven pillars.
²She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
 she has also set her table.

³She has sent out her maids, and she calls
from the highest point of the city:

⁴"Let all who are simple come in here!"
she says to those who lack judgment.

⁵"Come, eat my food
and drink the wine I have mixed.

⁶Leave your simple ways and you will live;
walk in the way of understanding.

⁷"Whoever corrects a mocker brings on insult;
whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.

⁸Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;
rebuke a wise man and he will love you.

⁹Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man and he will add to his
learning.

¹⁰"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is
understanding.

¹¹For through me your days will be many,
and years will be added to your life.

¹²If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you;
if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."

¹³The woman Folly is loud;
she is undisciplined and without knowledge.

¹⁴She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat at the highest point of the city,

¹⁵calling out to those who pass by,
who go straight on their way:

¹⁶"Let all who are simple come in here!"
she says to those who lack judgment.

¹⁷"Stolen water is sweet;
food eaten in secret is delicious!"

¹⁸But little do they know that the dead are there,
that her guests are in the depths of the grave.^a

Proverbs of Solomon

10 The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son grief to his mother.

²Ill-gotten treasures are of no value,
but righteousness delivers from death.

³The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

⁴Lazy hands make a man poor,
but diligent hands bring wealth.

⁵He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son,
but he who sleeps during harvest is a
disgraceful son.

⁶Blessings crown the head of the righteous,
but violence overwhelms the mouth of the
wicked.^b

⁷The memory of the righteous will be a blessing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.

⁸The wise in heart accept commands,
but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

⁹The man of integrity walks securely,
but he who takes crooked paths will be found
out.

¹⁰He who winks maliciously causes grief,
and a chattering fool comes to ruin.

¹¹The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,

^a 18 Hebrew Sheol

^b 6 Or but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence

but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.^a

¹²Hatred stirs up dissension,
but love covers over all wrongs.

¹³Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning,
but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.

¹⁴Wise men store up knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.

¹⁵The wealth of the rich is their fortified city,
but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

¹⁶The wages of the righteous bring them life
but the income of the wicked brings them punishment.

¹⁷He who heeds discipline shows the way to life,
but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.

¹⁸He who conceals his hatred has lying lips,
and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

¹⁹When words are many, sin is not absent,
but he who holds his tongue is wise.

²⁰The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,
but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

²¹The lips of the righteous nourish many,
but fools die for lack of judgment.

²²The blessing of the LORD brings wealth,
and he adds no trouble to it.

²³A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct,
but a man of understanding delights in wisdom.

^a 11 Or but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence

²⁴What the wicked dreads will overtake him;
what the righteous desire will be granted.

²⁵When the storm has swept by, the wicked are
gone,
but the righteous stand firm forever.

²⁶As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so is a sluggard to those who send him.

²⁷The fear of the LORD adds length to life,
but the years of the wicked are cut short.

²⁸The prospect of the righteous is joy,
but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

²⁹The way of the LORD is a refuge for the
righteous,
but it is the ruin of those who do evil.

³⁰The righteous will never be uprooted,
but the wicked will not remain in the land.

³¹The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but a perverse tongue will be cut out.

³²The lips of the righteous know what is fitting,
but the mouth of the wicked only what is
perverse.

11 The LORD abhors dishonest scales,
but accurate weights are his delight.

²When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.

³The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the unfaithful are destroyed by their
duplicity.

⁴Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death.

PROVERBS 11:5

⁵The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them,
but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.

⁶The righteousness of the upright delivers them,
but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires.

⁷When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes;
all he expected from his power comes to nothing.

⁸The righteous man is rescued from trouble,
and it comes on the wicked instead.

⁹With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor,
but through knowledge the righteous escape.

¹⁰When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices;
when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.

¹¹Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

¹²A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor,
but a man of understanding holds his tongue.

¹³A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.

¹⁴For lack of guidance a nation falls,
but many advisers make victory sure.

¹⁵He who puts up security for another will surely suffer,
but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe.

- ¹⁶A kind-hearted woman gains respect,
but ruthless men gain only wealth.
- ¹⁷A kind man benefits himself,
but a cruel man brings himself harm.
- ¹⁸The wicked man earns deceptive wages,
but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure
reward.
- ¹⁹The truly righteous man attains life,
but he who pursues evil goes to his death.
- ²⁰The LORD detests men of perverse heart
but he delights in those whose ways are
blameless.
- ²¹Be sure of this: The wicked will not go
unpunished,
but those who are righteous will go free.
- ²²Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.
- ²³The desire of the righteous ends only in good,
but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.
- ²⁴One man gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly, but comes to
poverty.
- ²⁵A generous man will prosper;
he who refreshes others will himself be
refreshed.
- ²⁶People curse the man who hoards grain,
but blessing crowns him who is willing to
sell.
- ²⁷He who seeks good finds good will,
but evil comes to him who searches for it.

- ²⁸Whoever trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.
- ²⁹He who brings trouble on his family will inherit
only wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise.
- ³⁰The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and he who wins souls is wise.
- ³¹If the righteous receive their due on earth,
how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

12 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates correction is stupid.

- ²A good man obtains favor from the LORD,
but the LORD condemns a crafty man.
- ³A man cannot be established through
wickedness,
but the righteous cannot be uprooted.
- ⁴A wife of noble character is her husband's
crown,
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his
bones.
- ⁵The plans of the righteous are just,
but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.
- ⁶The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,
but the speech of the upright rescues them.
- ⁷Wicked men are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous stands firm.
- ⁸A man is praised according to his wisdom,
but men with warped minds are despised.
- ⁹Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant

than pretend to be somebody and have no food.

¹⁰A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal,
but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

¹¹He who works his land will have abundant food,
but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

¹²The wicked desire the plunder of evil men,
but the root of the righteous flourishes.

¹³An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk,
but a righteous man escapes trouble.

¹⁴From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things
as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.

¹⁵The way of a fool seems right to him,
but a wise man listens to advice.

¹⁶A fool shows his annoyance at once,
but a prudent man overlooks an insult.

¹⁷A truthful witness gives honest testimony,
but a false witness tells lies.

¹⁸Reckless words pierce like a sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

¹⁹Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

²⁰There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil,
but joy for those who promote peace.

²¹No harm befalls the righteous,
but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

- ²²The LORD detests lying lips,
but he delights in men who are truthful.
- ²³A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself,
but the heart of fools blurts out folly.
- ²⁴Diligent hands will rule,
but laziness ends in slave labor.
- ²⁵An anxious heart weighs a man down,
but a kind word cheers him up.
- ²⁶A righteous man is cautious in friendship,^a
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
- ²⁷The lazy man does not roast^b his game,
but the diligent man prizes his possessions.
- ²⁸In the way of righteousness there is life;
along that path is immortality.

13 A wise son heeds his father's instruction,
but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

- ²From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things,
but the unfaithful have a craving for violence.
- ³He who guards his lips guards his soul,
but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.
- ⁴The sluggard craves and gets nothing,
but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.
- ⁵The righteous hate what is false,
but the wicked bring shame and disgrace.
- ⁶Righteousness guards the man of integrity,
but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

^a 26 Or *man is a guide to his neighbor*
uncertain.

^b 27 The meaning of the Hebrew word is

- ⁷One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing;
another pretends to be poor, yet has great
wealth.
- ⁸A man's riches may ransom his life,
but a poor man hears no threat.
- ⁹The light of the righteous shines brightly,
but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.
- ¹⁰Pride only breeds quarrels,
but wisdom is found in those who take advice.
- ¹¹Dishonest money dwindles away,
but he who gathers money little by little
makes it grow.
- ¹²Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
- ¹³He who scorns instruction will pay for it,
but he who respects a command is rewarded.
- ¹⁴The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
turning a man from the snares of death.
- ¹⁵Good understanding wins favor,
but the way of the unfaithful is hard.^a
- ¹⁶Every prudent man acts out of knowledge,
but a fool exposes his folly.
- ¹⁷A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.
- ¹⁸He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and
shame,
but whoever heeds correction is honored.
- ¹⁹A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
but fools detest turning from evil.

^a 15 Or *unfaithful does not endure*

²⁰He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.

²¹Misfortune pursues the sinner,
but prosperity is the reward of the righteous.

²²A good man leaves an inheritance for his
children's children,
but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the
righteous.

²³A poor man's field may produce abundant food,
but injustice sweeps it away.

²⁴He who spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him is careful to discipline
him.

²⁵The righteous eat to their hearts' content,
but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry.

14 The wise woman builds her house,
but with her own hands the foolish one tears
hers down.

²He whose walk is upright fears the LORD,
but he whose ways are devious despises him.

³A fool's talk brings a rod to his back,
but the lips of the wise protect them.

⁴Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty,
but from the strength of an ox comes an
abundant harvest.

⁵A truthful witness does not deceive,
but a false witness pours out lies.

⁶The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none,
but knowledge comes easily to the
discerning.

- ⁷Stay away from a foolish man,
for you will not find knowledge on his lips.
- ⁸The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to
their ways,
but the folly of fools is deception.
- ⁹Fools mock at making amends for sin,
but good will is found among the upright.
- ¹⁰Each heart knows its own bitterness,
and no one else can share its joy.
- ¹¹The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.
- ¹²There is a way that seems right to a man,
but in the end it leads to death.
- ¹³Even in laughter the heart may ache,
and joy may end in grief.
- ¹⁴The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways,
and the good man rewarded for his.
- ¹⁵A simple man believes anything,
but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.
- ¹⁶A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil,
but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.
- ¹⁷A quick-tempered man does foolish things,
and a crafty man is hated.
- ¹⁸The simple inherit folly,
but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- ¹⁹Evil men will bow down in the presence of the
good,
and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- ²⁰The poor are shunned even by their neighbors,
but the rich have many friends.

PROVERBS 14:21

- ²¹He who despises his neighbor sins,
but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.
- ²²Do not those who plot evil go astray?
But those who plan good find^a love and
faithfulness.
- ²³All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.
- ²⁴The wealth of the wise is their crown,
but the folly of fools yields folly.
- ²⁵A truthful witness saves lives,
but a false witness is deceitful.
- ²⁶He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress,
and for his children it will be a refuge.
- ²⁷The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
turning a man from the snares of death.
- ²⁸A large population is a king's glory,
but without subjects a prince is ruined.
- ²⁹A patient man has great understanding,
but a quick-tempered man displays folly.
- ³⁰A heart at peace gives life to the body,
but envy rots the bones.
- ³¹He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for
their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.
- ³²When calamity comes, the wicked are brought
down,
but even in death the righteous have a refuge.
- ³³Wisdom reposes in the heart of the discerning

^a 22 Or *show*

and even among fools she lets herself be known.^a

³⁴Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a disgrace to any people.

³⁵A king delights in a wise servant,
but a shameful servant incurs his wrath.

15 A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

²The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

³The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,
keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

⁴The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life,
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

⁵A fool spurns his father's discipline,
but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.

⁶The house of the righteous contains great
treasure,
but the income of the wicked brings them
trouble.

⁷The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the hearts of fools.

⁸The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked,
but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

⁹The LORD detests the way of the wicked
but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

¹⁰Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path;
he who hates correction will die.

^a 33 Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac *but in the heart of fools she is not known*

PROVERBS 15:11

¹¹Death and Destruction^a lie open before the
LORD—

how much more the hearts of men!

¹²A mocker resents correction;
he will not consult the wise.

¹³A happy heart makes the face cheerful,
but heartache crushes the spirit.

¹⁴The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

¹⁵All the days of the oppressed are wretched,
but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

¹⁶Better a little with the fear of the LORD
than great wealth with turmoil.

¹⁷Better a meal of vegetables where there is love
than a fattened calf with hatred.

¹⁸A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension,
but a patient man calms a quarrel.

¹⁹The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns,
but the path of the upright is a highway.

²⁰A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish man despises his mother.

²¹Folly delights a man who lacks judgment,
but a man of understanding keeps a straight
course.

²²Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed.

²³A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—
and how good is a timely word!

^a 11 Hebrew *Sheol and Abaddon*

- ²⁴The path of life leads upward for the wise
to keep him from going down to the grave.^a
- ²⁵The LORD tears down the proud man's house
but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact.
- ²⁶The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked,
but those of the pure are pleasing to him.
- ²⁷A greedy man brings trouble to his family,
but he who hates bribes will live.
- ²⁸The heart of the righteous weighs its answers,
but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.
- ²⁹The LORD is far from the wicked
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
- ³⁰A cheerful look brings joy to the heart,
and good news gives health to the bones.
- ³¹He who listens to a life-giving rebuke
will be at home among the wise.
- ³²He who ignores discipline despises himself,
but whoever heeds correction gains
understanding.
- ³³The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom,^b
and humility comes before honor.

16 To man belong the plans of the heart,
but from the LORD comes the reply of the
tongue.

- ²All a man's ways seem innocent to him,
but motives are weighed by the LORD.
- ³Commit to the LORD whatever you do,
and your plans will succeed.

^a 24 Hebrew *Sheol*

^b 33 Or *Wisdom teaches the fear of the LORD*

- ⁴The LORD works out everything for his own ends—
even the wicked for a day of disaster.
- ⁵The LORD detests all the proud of heart.
Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.
- ⁶Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;
through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.
- ⁷When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD,
he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.
- ⁸Better a little with righteousness
than much gain with injustice.
- ⁹In his heart a man plans his course,
but the LORD determines his steps.
- ¹⁰The lips of a king speak as an oracle,
and his mouth should not betray justice.
- ¹¹Honest scales and balances are from the LORD;
all the weights in the bag are of his making.
- ¹²Kings detest wrongdoing,
for a throne is established through righteousness.
- ¹³Kings take pleasure in honest lips;
they value a man who speaks the truth.
- ¹⁴A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
but a wise man will appease it.
- ¹⁵When a king's face brightens, it means life;
his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.
- ¹⁶How much better to get wisdom than gold,
to choose understanding rather than silver!

- ¹⁷The highway of the upright avoids evil;
he who guards his way guards his soul.
- ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction,
a haughty spirit before a fall.
- ¹⁹Better to be lowly in spirit and among the
oppressed
than to share plunder with the proud.
- ²⁰Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers,
and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
- ²¹The wise in heart are called discerning,
and pleasant words promote instruction.^a
- ²²Understanding is a fountain of life to those who
have it,
but folly brings punishment to fools.
- ²³A wise man's heart guides his mouth,
and his lips promote instruction.^b
- ²⁴Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
- ²⁵There is a way that seems right to a man
but in the end it leads to death.
- ²⁶The laborer's appetite works for him;
his hunger drives him on.
- ²⁷A scoundrel plots evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- ²⁸A perverse man stirs up dissension,
and a gossip separates close friends.
- ²⁹A violent man entices his neighbor
and leads him down a path that is not good.

^a 21 Or words make a man persuasive

^b 23 Or and makes his lips persuasive

³⁰He who winks with his eye is plotting
perversity;
he who purses his lips is bent on evil.

³¹Gray hair is a crown of splendor;
it is attained by a righteous life.

³²Better a patient man than a warrior,
a man who controls his temper than one who
takes a city.

³³The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.

17 Better a dry crust with peace and quiet
than a house full of feasting,^a with strife.

²A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son,
and will share the inheritance as one of the
brothers.

³The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,
but the LORD tests the heart.

⁴A wicked man listens to evil lips;
a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.

⁵He who mocks the poor shows contempt for
their Maker;
whoever gloats over disaster will not go
unpunished.

⁶Children's children are a crown to the aged,
and parents are the pride of their children.

⁷Arrogant^b lips are unsuited to a fool—
how much worse lying lips to a ruler!

⁸A bribe is a charm to the one who gives it;
wherever he turns, he succeeds.

^a 1 Hebrew sacrifices

^b 7 Or Eloquent

- ⁹He who covers over an offense promotes love,
but whoever repeats the matter separates close
friends.
- ¹⁰A rebuke impresses a man of discernment
more than a hundred lashes a fool.
- ¹¹An evil man is bent only on rebellion;
a merciless official will be sent against him.
- ¹²Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs
than a fool in his folly.
- ¹³If a man pays back evil for good,
evil will never leave his house.
- ¹⁴Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam;
so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.
- ¹⁵Acquitting the guilty and condemning the
innocent—
the LORD detests them both.
- ¹⁶Of what use is money in the hand of a fool,
since he has no desire to get wisdom?
- ¹⁷A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity.
- ¹⁸A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in
pledge
and puts up security for his neighbor.
- ¹⁹He who loves a quarrel loves sin;
he who builds a high gate invites destruction.
- ²⁰A man of perverse heart does not prosper;
he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble.
- ²¹To have a fool for a son brings grief;
there is no joy for the father of a fool.

²²A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

²³A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret
to pervert the course of justice.

²⁴A discerning man keeps wisdom in view,
but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the
earth.

²⁵A foolish son brings grief to his father
and bitterness to the one who bore him.

²⁶It is not good to punish an innocent man,
or to flog officials for their integrity.

²⁷A man of knowledge uses words with restraint,
and a man of understanding is even-tempered.

²⁸Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent,
and discerning if he holds his tongue.

18 An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends;
he defies all sound judgment.

²A fool finds no pleasure in understanding,
but delights in airing his own opinions.

³When wickedness comes, so does contempt,
and with shame comes disgrace.

⁴The words of a man's mouth are deep waters,
but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling
brook.

⁵It is not good to be partial to the wicked
or to deprive the innocent of justice.

⁶A fool's lips bring him strife,
and his mouth invites a beating.

⁷A fool's mouth is his undoing,
and his lips are a snare to his soul.

- ⁸The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;
they go down to a man's inmost parts.
- ⁹One who is slack in his work
is brother to one who destroys.
- ¹⁰The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
the righteous run to it and are safe.
- ¹¹The wealth of the rich is their fortified city;
they imagine it an unscalable wall.
- ¹²Before his downfall a man's heart is proud,
but humility comes before honor.
- ¹³He who answers before listening—
that is his folly and his shame.
- ¹⁴A man's spirit sustains him in sickness,
but a crushed spirit who can bear?
- ¹⁵The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge;
the ears of the wise seek it out.
- ¹⁶A gift opens the way for the giver
and ushers him into the presence of the
great.
- ¹⁷The first to present his case seems right,
till another comes forward and questions him.
- ¹⁸Casting the lot settles disputes
and keeps strong opponents apart.
- ¹⁹An offended brother is more unyielding than a
fortified city,
and disputes are like the barred gates of a
citadel.
- ²⁰From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is
filled;
with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.

²¹The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

²²He who finds a wife finds what is good
and receives favor from the LORD.

²³A poor man pleads for mercy,
but a rich man answers harshly.

²⁴A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a
brother.

19 Better a poor man whose walk is blameless
than a fool whose lips are perverse.

²It is not good to have zeal without knowledge,
nor to be hasty and miss the way.

³A man's own folly ruins his life,
yet his heart rages against the LORD.

⁴Wealth brings many friends,
but a poor man's friend deserts him.

⁵A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who pours out lies will not go free.

⁶Many curry favor with a ruler,
and everyone is the friend of a man who gives
gifts.

⁷A poor man is shunned by all his relatives—
how much more do his friends avoid him!
Though he pursues them with pleading,
they are nowhere to be found.^a

⁸He who gets wisdom loves his own soul;
he who cherishes understanding prospers.

^a ⁷ The meaning of the Hebrew sentence is uncertain.

- ⁹A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who pours out lies will perish.
- ¹⁰It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—
how much worse for a slave to rule over
princes!
- ¹¹A man's wisdom gives him patience;
it is to his glory to overlook an offense.
- ¹²A king's rage is like the roar of a lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- ¹³A foolish son is his father's ruin,
and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant
dripping.
- ¹⁴Houses and wealth are inherited from parents,
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- ¹⁵Laziness brings on deep sleep,
and the shiftless man goes hungry.
- ¹⁶He who obeys instructions guards his soul,
but he who is contemptuous of his ways will
die.
- ¹⁷He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will reward him for what he has done.
- ¹⁸Discipline your son, for in that there is hope;
do not be a willing party to his death.
- ¹⁹A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty;
if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.
- ²⁰Listen to advice and accept instruction,
and in the end you will be wise.
- ²¹Many are the plans in a man's heart,
but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

PROVERBS 19:22

²²What a man desires is unfailing love;^a
better to be poor than a liar.

²³The fear of the LORD leads to life:
Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.

²⁴The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he will not even bring it back to his mouth!

²⁵Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn
prudence;
rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain
knowledge.

²⁶He who robs his father and drives out his
mother
is a son who brings shame and disgrace.

²⁷Stop listening to instruction, my son,
and you will stray from the words of
knowledge.

²⁸A corrupt witness mocks at justice,
and the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.

²⁹Penalties are prepared for mockers,
and beatings for the backs of fools.

20 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

²A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion;
he who angers him forfeits his life.

³It is to a man's honor to avoid strife,
but every fool is quick to quarrel.

⁴A sluggard does not plow in season;
so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing.

^a 22 Or *A man's greed is his shame*

- ⁵The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters,
but a man of understanding draws them out.
- ⁶Many a man claims to have unfailing love,
but a faithful man who can find?
- ⁷The righteous man leads a blameless life;
blessed are his children after him.
- ⁸When a king sits on his throne to judge,
he winnows out all evil with his eyes.
- ⁹Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure;
I am clean and without sin"?
- ¹⁰Differing weights and differing measures—
the LORD detests them both.
- ¹¹Even a child is known by his actions,
by whether his conduct is pure and right.
- ¹²Ears that hear and eyes that see—
the LORD has made them both.
- ¹³Do not love sleep or you will grow poor;
stay awake and you will have food to spare.
- ¹⁴"It's no good, it's no good!" says the buyer;
then off he goes and boasts about his
purchase.
- ¹⁵Gold there is, and rubies in abundance,
but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.
- ¹⁶Take the garment of one who puts up security
for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward
woman.
- ¹⁷Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man,
but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel.

- ¹⁸Make plans by seeking advice;
if you wage war, obtain guidance.
- ¹⁹A gossip betrays a confidence;
so avoid a man who talks too much.
- ²⁰If a man curses his father or mother,
his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.
- ²¹An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning
will not be blessed at the end.
- ²²Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!"
Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.
- ²³The LORD detests differing weights,
and dishonest scales do not please him.
- ²⁴A man's steps are directed by the LORD;
how then can anyone understand his own
way?
- ²⁵It is a trap for a man to dedicate something
rashly
and only later to consider his vows.
- ²⁶A wise king winnows out the wicked;
he drives the threshing wheel over them.
- ²⁷The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a
man;^a
it searches out his inmost being.
- ²⁸Love and faithfulness keep a king safe;
through love his throne is made secure.
- ²⁹The glory of young men is their strength,
gray hair the splendor of the old.
- ³⁰Blows and wounds cleanse away evil,
and beatings purge the inmost being.

^a 27 Or *The spirit of man is the LORD's lamp*

21 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD;
he directs it like a watercourse wherever he
pleases.

²All a man's ways seem right to him,
but the LORD weighs the heart.

³To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

⁴Haughty eyes and a proud heart,
the lamp of the wicked, are sin!

⁵The plans of the diligent lead to profit
as surely as haste leads to poverty.

⁶A fortune made by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.^a

⁷The violence of the wicked will drag them away,
for they refuse to do what is right.

⁸The way of the guilty is devious,
but the conduct of the innocent is upright.

⁹Better to live on a corner of the roof
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

¹⁰The wicked man craves evil;
his neighbor gets no mercy from him.

¹¹When a mocker is punished, the simple gain
wisdom;
when a wise man is instructed, he gets
knowledge.

¹²The Righteous One^b takes note of the house of
the wicked
and brings the wicked to ruin.

^a 6 Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts
vapor for those who seek death

^b 12 Or The righteous man

PROVERBS 21:13

- ¹³If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor,
he too will cry out and not be answered.
- ¹⁴A gift given in secret soothes anger,
and a bribe concealed in the cloak pacifies
great wrath.
- ¹⁵When justice is done, it brings joy to the
righteous
but terror to evildoers.
- ¹⁶A man who strays from the path of
understanding
comes to rest in the company of the dead.
- ¹⁷He who loves pleasure will become poor;
whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.
- ¹⁸The wicked become a ransom for the righteous,
and the unfaithful for the upright.
- ¹⁹Better to live in a desert
than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.
- ²⁰In the house of the wise are stores of choice food
and oil,
but a foolish man devours all he has.
- ²¹He who pursues righteousness and love
finds life, prosperity^a and honor.
- ²²A wise man attacks the city of the mighty
and pulls down the stronghold in which they
trust.
- ²³He who guards his mouth and his tongue
keeps himself from calamity.
- ²⁴The proud and arrogant man—"Mocker" is his
name;

^a 21 Or *righteousness*

he behaves with overweening pride.

²⁵The sluggard's craving will be the death of him,
because his hands refuse to work.

²⁶All day long he craves for more,
but the righteous give without sparing.

²⁷The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—
how much more so when brought with evil
intent!

²⁸A false witness will perish,
and whoever listens to him will be destroyed
forever.^a

²⁹A wicked man puts up a bold front,
but an upright man gives thought to his ways.

³⁰There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan
that can succeed against the LORD.

³¹The horse is made ready for the day of battle,
but victory rests with the LORD.

22 A good name is more desirable than great riches;
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

²Rich and poor have this in common:
The LORD is the Maker of them all.

³A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge,
but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

⁴Humility and the fear of the LORD
bring wealth and honor and life.

⁵In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares,
but he who guards his soul stays far from
them.

^a 28 Or but the words of an obedient man will live on

PROVERBS 22:6

⁶Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn
from it.

⁷The rich rule over the poor,
and the borrower is servant to the lender.

⁸He who sows wickedness reaps trouble,
and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

⁹A generous man will himself be blessed,
for he shares his food with the poor.

¹⁰Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife;
quarrels and insults are ended.

¹¹He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is
gracious
will have the king for his friend.

¹²The eyes of the LORD keep watch over
knowledge,
but he frustrates the words of the
unfaithful.

¹³The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!"
or, "I will be murdered in the streets!"

¹⁴The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit;
he who is under the LORD's wrath will fall
into it.

¹⁵Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,
but the rod of discipline will drive it far from
him.

¹⁶He who oppresses the poor to increase his
wealth
and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come
to poverty.

Sayings of the Wise

- ¹⁷Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise;
 apply your heart to what I teach,
¹⁸for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart
 and have all of them ready on your lips.
¹⁹So that your trust may be in the LORD,
 I teach you today, even you.
²⁰Have I not written thirty^a sayings for you,
 sayings of counsel and knowledge,
²¹teaching you true and reliable words,
 so that you can give sound answers to him
 who sent you?
- ²²Do not exploit the poor because they are poor
 and do not crush the needy in court,
²³for the LORD will take up their case
 and will plunder those who plunder them.
- ²⁴Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man,
 do not associate with one easily angered,
²⁵or you may learn his ways
 and get yourself ensnared.
- ²⁶Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge
 or puts up security for debts;
²⁷if you lack the means to pay,
 your very bed will be snatched from under
 you.
- ²⁸Do not move an ancient boundary stone
 set up by your forefathers.
- ²⁹Do you see a man skilled in his work?
 He will serve before kings;
 he will not serve before obscure men.

^a 20 Or not formerly written; or not written excellent

- 23** When you sit to dine with a ruler,
 note well what^a is before you,
²and put a knife to your throat
 if you are given to gluttony.
³Do not crave his delicacies,
 for that food is deceptive.
- ⁴Do not wear yourself out to get rich;
 have the wisdom to show restraint.
- ⁵Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone,
 for they will surely sprout wings
 and fly off to the sky like an eagle.
- ⁶Do not eat the food of a stingy man,
 do not crave his delicacies;
⁷for he is the kind of man
 who is always thinking about the cost.^b
 "Eat and drink," he says to you,
 but his heart is not with you.
- ⁸You will vomit up the little you have eaten
 and will have wasted your compliments.
- ⁹Do not speak to a fool,
 for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.
- ¹⁰Do not move an ancient boundary stone
 or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,
¹¹for their Defender is strong;
 he will take up their case against you.
- ¹²Apply your heart to instruction
 and your ears to words of knowledge.
- ¹³Do not withhold discipline from a child;
 if you punish him with the rod, he will not
 die.
- ¹⁴Punish him with the rod

^a 1 Or who
 so he is

^b 7 Or for as he thinks within himself, so he is; or for as he puts on a feast.

and save his soul from death.^a

¹⁵My son, if your heart is wise,
then my heart will be glad;

¹⁶my inmost being will rejoice
when your lips speak what is right.

¹⁷Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.

¹⁸There is surely a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off.

¹⁹Listen, my son, and be wise,
and keep your heart on the right path.

²⁰Do not join those who drink too much wine
or gorge themselves on meat,

²¹for drunkards and gluttons become poor,
and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

²²Listen to your father, who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when she is
old.

²³Buy the truth and do not sell it;
get wisdom, discipline and understanding.

²⁴The father of a righteous man has great joy;
he who has a wise son delights in him.

²⁵May your father and mother be glad;
may she who gave you birth rejoice!

²⁶My son, give me your heart
and let your eyes keep to my ways,

²⁷for a prostitute is a deep pit
and a wayward wife is a narrow well.

²⁸Like a bandit she lies in wait,
and multiplies the unfaithful among men.

²⁹Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaints?

^a 14 Hebrew *Sheol*

Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?

³⁰Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.

³¹Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!

³²In the end it bites like a snake
and poisons like a viper.

³³Your eyes will see strange sights
and your mind imagine confusing things.

³⁴You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
lying on top of the rigging.

³⁵"They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!
They beat me, but I don't feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?"

24 Do not envy wicked men,
do not desire their company;
²for their hearts plot violence,
and their lips talk about making trouble.

³By wisdom a house is built,
and through understanding it is established;
⁴through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures.

⁵A wise man has great power,
and a man of knowledge increases strength;
⁶for waging war you need guidance,
and for victory many advisers.

⁷Wisdom is too high for a fool;
in the assembly at the gate he has nothing to
say.

⁸He who plots evil
will be known as a schemer.

- ⁹The schemes of folly are sin,
and men detest a mocker.
- ¹⁰If you falter in times of trouble,
how small is your strength!
- ¹¹Rescue those being led away to death;
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.
- ¹²If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who guards your life know it?
Will he not repay each person according to
what he has done?
- ¹³Eat honey, my son, for it is good;
honey from the comb is sweet to your taste.
- ¹⁴Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul;
if you find it, there is a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off.
- ¹⁵Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a
righteous man's house,
do not raid his dwelling place;
- ¹⁶for though a righteous man falls seven times, he
rises again,
but the wicked are brought down by
calamity.
- ¹⁷Do not gloat when your enemy falls;
when he stumbles, do not let your heart
rejoice,
- ¹⁸or the LORD will see and disapprove
and turn his wrath away from him.
- ¹⁹Do not fret because of evildoers
or be envious of the wicked,
- ²⁰for the evil man has no future hope,
and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed
out.

- ²¹Fear the LORD and the king, my son,
and do not join with the rebellious,
²²for those two will send sudden destruction upon
them,
and who knows what calamities they can
bring?

Further Sayings of the Wise

- ²³These also are sayings of the wise:
To show partiality in judging is not good:
²⁴Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent"—
peoples will curse him and nations denounce
him.
²⁵But it will go well with those who convict the
guilty,
and rich blessing will come upon them.
²⁶An honest answer
is like a kiss on the lips.
²⁷Finish your outdoor work
and get your fields ready;
after that, build your house.
²⁸Do not testify against your neighbor without
cause,
or use your lips to deceive.
²⁹Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me;
I'll pay that man back for what he did."
³⁰I went past the field of the sluggard,
past the vineyard of the man who lacks
judgment;
³¹thorns had come up everywhere,
the ground was covered with weeds,
and the stone wall was in ruins.
³²I applied my heart to what I observed
and learned a lesson from what I saw:

- ³³A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
³⁴and poverty will come on you like a bandit
and scarcity like an armed man.^a

More Proverbs of Solomon

25 These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:

- ²It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;
to search out a matter is the glory of kings.
- ³As the heavens are high and the earth is deep,
so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.
- ⁴Remove the dross from the silver,
and out comes material for^b the silversmith;
⁵remove the wicked from the king's presence,
and his throne will be established through
righteousness.
- ⁶Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence,
and do not claim a place among great men;
⁷it is better for him to say to you, "Come up
here,"
than for him to humiliate you before a
nobleman.
- ⁸What you have seen with your eyes
do not bring^c hastily to court,
for what will you do in the end
if your neighbor puts you to shame?
- ⁹If you argue your case with a neighbor,
do not betray another man's confidence,
¹⁰or he who hears it may shame you
and you will never lose your bad reputation.

^a 34 Or like a vagrant / and scarcity like a beggar ^b 4 Or comes a vessel from
^c 8 Or nobleman / on whom you had set your eyes. / ^s Do not go

- ¹¹A word aptly spoken
is like apples of gold in settings of silver.
- ¹²Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine
gold
is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.
- ¹³Like the coolness of snow at harvest time
is a trustworthy messenger to those who send
him;
he refreshes the spirit of his masters.
- ¹⁴Like clouds and wind without rain
is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give.
- ¹⁵Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
and a gentle tongue can break a bone.
- ¹⁶If you find honey, eat just enough—
too much of it, and you will vomit.
- ¹⁷Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house—
too much of you, and he will hate you.
- ¹⁸Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow
is the man who gives false testimony against
his neighbor.
- ¹⁹Like a bad tooth or a lame foot
is reliance on the unfaithful in times of
trouble.
- ²⁰Like one who takes away a garment on a cold
day,
or like vinegar poured on soda,
is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.
- ²¹If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.
- ²²In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his
head,
and the LORD will reward you.

- ²³As a north wind brings rain,
so a sly tongue brings angry looks.
- ²⁴Better to live on a corner of the roof
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.
- ²⁵Like cold water to a weary soul
is good news from a distant land.
- ²⁶Like a muddied spring or a polluted well
is a righteous man who gives way to the
wicked.
- ²⁷It is not good to eat too much honey,
nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor.
- ²⁸Like a city whose walls are broken down
is a man who lacks self-control.

26 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
honor is not fitting for a fool.

- ²Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow,
an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
- ³A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey,
and a rod for the backs of fools!
- ⁴Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you will be like him yourself.
- ⁵Answer a fool according to his folly,
or he will be wise in his own eyes.
- ⁶Like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence
is the sending of a message by the hand of a
fool.
- ⁷Like a lame man's legs that hang limp
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

- ⁸Like tying a stone in a sling
is the giving of honor to a fool.
- ⁹Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
- ¹⁰Like an archer who wounds at random
is he who hires a fool or any passer-by.
- ¹¹As a dog returns to its vomit,
so a fool repeats his folly.
- ¹²Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ¹³The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road,
a fierce lion roaming the streets!"
- ¹⁴As a door turns on its hinges,
so a sluggard turns on his bed.
- ¹⁵The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.
- ¹⁶The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who answer discreetly.
- ¹⁷Like one who seizes a dog by the ears
is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not
his own.
- ¹⁸Like a madman shooting
firebrands or deadly arrows
- ¹⁹is a man who deceives his neighbor
and says, "I was only joking!"
- ²⁰Without wood a fire goes out;
without gossip a quarrel dies down.
- ²¹As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.

²²The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;
they go down to a man's inmost parts.

²³Like a coating of glaze^a over earthenware
are fervent lips with an evil heart.

²⁴A malicious man disguises himself with his lips,
but in his heart he harbors deceit.

²⁵Though his speech is charming, do not believe
him,
for seven abominations fill his heart.

²⁶His malice may be concealed by deception,
but his wickedness will be exposed in the
assembly.

²⁷If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it;
if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

²⁸A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.

27 Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring
forth.

²Let another praise you, and not your own
mouth;
someone else, and not your own lips.

³Stone is heavy and sand a burden,
but provocation by a fool is heavier than both.

⁴Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming,
but who can stand before jealousy?

⁵Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

^a 23 With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic text of *silver dress*

PROVERBS 27:6

⁶The kisses of an enemy may be profuse,
but faithful are the wounds of a friend.

⁷He who is full loathes honey,
but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes
sweet.

⁸Like a bird that strays from its nest
is a man who strays from his home.

⁹Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of one's friend springs
from his earnest counsel.

¹⁰Do not forsake your friend and the friend of
your father,
and do not go to your brother's house when
disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far
away.

¹¹Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart;
then I can answer anyone who treats me with
contempt.

¹²The prudent see danger and take refuge,
but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

¹³Take the garment of one who puts up security
for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward
woman.

¹⁴If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the
morning,
it will be taken as a curse.

¹⁵A quarrelsome wife is like
a constant dripping on a rainy day;

¹⁶restraining her is like restraining the wind
or grasping oil with the hand.

¹⁷As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens another.

¹⁸He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and he who looks after his master will be
honored.

¹⁹As water reflects a face,
so a man's heart reflects the man.

²⁰Death and Destruction^a are never satisfied,
and neither are the eyes of man.

²¹The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,
but man is tested by the praise he receives.

²²Though you grind a fool in a mortar,
grinding him like grain with a pestle,
you will not remove his folly from him.

²³Be sure you know the condition of your flocks,
give careful attention to your herds;

²⁴for riches do not endure forever,
and a crown is not secure for all generations.

²⁵When the hay is removed and new growth
appears
and the grass from the hills is gathered in,

²⁶the lambs will provide you with clothing,
and the goats with the price of a field.

²⁷You will have plenty of goats' milk
to feed you and your family
and to nourish your servant girls.

28 The wicked man flees though no one pursues,
but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

²When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers,
but a man of understanding and knowledge
maintains order.

^a 20 Hebrew Sheol and Abaddon

³A ruler^a who oppresses the poor
is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.

⁴Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
but those who keep the law resist them.

⁵Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD understand it
fully.

⁶Better a poor man whose walk is blameless
than a rich man whose ways are perverse.

⁷He who keeps the law is a discerning son,
but a companion of gluttons disgraces his
father.

⁸He who increases his wealth by exorbitant
interest
amasses it for another, who will be kind to the
poor.

⁹If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law,
even his prayers are detestable.

¹⁰He who leads the upright along an evil path
will fall into his own trap,
but the blameless will receive a good
inheritance.

¹¹A rich man may be wise in his own eyes,
but a poor man who has discernment sees
through him.

¹²When the righteous triumph, there is great
elation;
but when the wicked rise to power, men go
into hiding.

^a 3 Or *A poor man*

- ¹³He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them
finds mercy.
- ¹⁴Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD,
but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.
- ¹⁵Like a roaring lion or a charging bear
is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people.
- ¹⁶A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment,
but he who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a
long life.
- ¹⁷A man tormented by the guilt of murder
will be a fugitive till death;
let no one support him.
- ¹⁸He whose walk is blameless is kept safe,
but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly
fall.
- ¹⁹He who works his land will have abundant food,
but the one who chases fantasies will have his
fill of poverty.
- ²⁰A faithful man will be richly blessed,
but one eager to get rich will not go
unpunished.
- ²¹To show partiality is not good—
yet a man will do wrong for a piece of bread.
- ²²A stingy man is eager to get rich
and is unaware that poverty awaits him.
- ²³He who rebukes a man will in the end gain
more favor
than he who has a flattering tongue.
- ²⁴He who robs his father or mother
and says, "It's not wrong"—

he is partner to him who destroys.

²⁵A greedy man stirs up dissension,
but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.

²⁶He who trusts in himself is a fool,
but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

²⁷He who gives to the poor will lack nothing,
but he who closes his eyes to them receives
many curses.

²⁸When the wicked rise to power, people go into
hiding;
but when the wicked perish, the righteous
thrive.

29 A man who remains stiff-necked after many
rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.

²When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice;
when the wicked rule, the people groan.

³A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his
father,
but a companion of prostitutes squanders his
wealth.

⁴By justice a king gives a country stability,
but one who is greedy for bribes tears it
down.

⁵Whoever flatters his neighbor
is spreading a net for his feet.

⁶An evil man is snared by his own sin,
but a righteous one can sing and be glad.

⁷The righteous care about justice for the poor,
but the wicked have no such concern.

- ⁸Mockers stir up a city,
but wise men turn away anger.
- ⁹If a wise man goes to court with a fool,
the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.
- ¹⁰Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity
and seek to kill the upright.
- ¹¹A fool gives full vent to his anger,
but a wise man keeps himself under control.
- ¹²If a ruler listens to lies,
all his officials become wicked.
- ¹³The poor man and the oppressor have this in
common:
The LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.
- ¹⁴If a king judges the poor with fairness,
his throne will always be secure.
- ¹⁵The rod of correction imparts wisdom,
but a child left to itself disgraces his mother.
- ¹⁶When the wicked thrive, so does sin,
but the righteous will see their downfall.
- ¹⁷Discipline your son, and he will give you peace;
he will bring delight to your soul.
- ¹⁸Where there is no revelation, the people cast off
restraint;
but blessed is he who keeps the law.
- ¹⁹A servant cannot be corrected by mere words;
though he understands, he will not respond.
- ²⁰Do you see a man who speaks in haste?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ²¹If a man pampers his servant from youth,

he will bring grief^a in the end.

²²An angry man stirs up dissension,
and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.

²³A man's pride brings him low,
but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

²⁴The accomplice of a thief is his own enemy;
he is put under oath and dare not testify.

²⁵Fear of man will prove to be a snare,
but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

²⁶Many seek an audience with a ruler,
but it is from the LORD that man gets justice.

²⁷The righteous detest the dishonest;
the wicked detest the upright.

Sayings of Agur -

30 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh—an oracle:^b

This man declared to Ithiel,
to Ithiel and to Ucal:^c

²"I am the most ignorant of men;
I do not have a man's understanding.

³I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.

⁴Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow
of his hands?

Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name, and the name of his son?
Tell me if you know!

^a 21 See Septuagint; the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain

^b 1 Or *Jakeh of Massa* ^c 1 Or with a different division of the Hebrew words,
declared, "I am weary, O God, / I am weary, O God, and I am faint.

⁵“Every word of God is flawless;
 he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
⁶Do not add to his words,
 or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

⁷“Two things I ask of you, O LORD;
 do not refuse me before I die:

⁸Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
 give me neither poverty nor riches,
 but give me only my daily bread.

⁹Otherwise, I may have too much and disown
 you
 and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’
 Or I may become poor and steal,
 and so dishonor the name of my God.

¹⁰“Do not slander a servant to his master,
 or he will curse you, and you will pay for it.

¹¹“There are those who curse their fathers
 and do not bless their mothers;

¹²those who are pure in their own eyes
 and yet are not cleansed of their filth;

¹³those whose eyes are ever so haughty,
 whose glances are so disdainful;

¹⁴those whose teeth are swords
 and whose jaws are set with knives
 to devour the poor from the earth,
 the needy from among mankind.

¹⁵“The leech has two daughters.
 ‘Give! Give!’ they cry.

“There are three things that are never satisfied,
 four that never say, ‘Enough!’:

¹⁶the grave,^a the barren womb,
land, which is never satisfied with water,
and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'

¹⁷"The eye that mocks a father,
that scorns obedience to a mother,
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley,
will be eaten by the vultures.

¹⁸"There are three things that are too amazing for
me,

four that I do not understand:

¹⁹the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a maiden.

²⁰"This is the way of an adulteress:
She eats and wipes her mouth
and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'

²¹"Under three things the earth trembles,
under four it cannot bear up:

²²a servant who becomes king,
a fool who is full of food,

²³an unloved woman who is married,
and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

²⁴"Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:

²⁵Ants are creatures of little strength,
yet they store up their food in the summer;

²⁶conies are creatures of little power,
yet they make their home in the crags;

²⁷locusts have no king,

^a 16 Hebrew *Sheol*

yet they advance together in ranks;
²⁸a lizard can be caught with the hand,
 yet it is found in kings' palaces.

²⁹“There are three things that are stately in their stride,
 four that move with stately bearing;
³⁰a lion, mighty among beasts,
 who retreats before nothing;
³¹a strutting rooster, a he-goat,
 and a king with his army around him.^a

³²“If you have played the fool and exalted yourself,
 or if you have planned evil,
 clap your hand over your mouth!
³³For as churning the milk produces butter,
 and as twisting the nose produces blood,
 so stirring up anger produces strife.”

Sayings of King Lemuel

31 The sayings of King Lemuel—an oracle^b his mother taught him:

²“O my son, O son of my womb,
 O son of my vows,^c
³do not spend your strength on women,
 your vigor on those who ruin kings.

⁴“It is not for kings, O Lemuel—
 not for kings to drink wine,
 not for rulers to crave beer,
⁵lest they drink and forget what the law decrees,
 and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.
⁶Give beer to those who are perishing,
 wine to those who are in anguish;

^a 31 Or king secure against revolt ^b 1 Or of Lemuel king of Massa
^c 2 Or womb, / the answer to my prayers

⁷let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.

⁸“Speak up for those who cannot speak for
themselves,

for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character

^{10a}A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.

¹¹Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.

¹²She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

¹³She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.

¹⁴She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.

¹⁵She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.

¹⁶She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

¹⁷She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.

¹⁸She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.

¹⁹In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

²⁰She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

^a 10) Verses 10-31 are an acrostic, each verse beginning with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

- ²¹When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
- ²²She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
- ²³Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
- ²⁴She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.
- ²⁵She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.
- ²⁶She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
- ²⁷She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- ²⁸Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
- ²⁹"Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."
- ³⁰Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
- ³¹Give her the reward she has earned,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes

Everything Is Meaningless

1 The words of the Teacher,^a son of David, king in Jerusalem:

²“Meaningless! Meaningless!”

says the Teacher.^a

“Utterly meaningless!

Everything is meaningless.”

³What does man gain from all his labor
at which he toils under the sun?

⁴Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.

⁵The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.

⁶The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north;
round and round it goes,
ever returning on its course.

⁷All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.

⁸All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.
The eye never has enough of seeing,
or the ear its fill of hearing.

^a 1, 2 Or the leader of the assembly

⁹What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰Is there anything of which one can say,
“Look! This is something new”?

It was here already, long ago;
it was here before our time.

¹¹There is no remembrance of men of old,
and even those who are yet to come
will not be remembered
by those who follow.

Wisdom Is Meaningless

¹²I, the Teacher,^a was king over Israel in Jerusalem.
¹³I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that
is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on
men! ¹⁴I have seen all the things that are done under the sun;
all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

¹⁵What is twisted cannot be straightened;
what is lacking cannot be counted.

¹⁶I thought to myself, “Look, I have grown and increased
in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem
before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowl-
edge.” ¹⁷Then I applied myself to the understanding of
wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that
this, too, is a chasing after the wind.

¹⁸For with much wisdom comes much sorrow;
the more knowledge, the more grief.

Pleasures Are Meaningless

2 I thought in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with
pleasure to find out what is good.” But that also proved
to be meaningless. ²“Laughter,” I said, “is foolish. And what
does pleasure accomplish?” ³I tried cheering myself with

^a 12 Or the leader of the assembly

wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

⁴I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. ⁵I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ⁷I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. ⁸I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem^a as well—the delights of the heart of man. ⁹I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

¹⁰I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;

I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my work,

and this was the reward for all my labor.

¹¹Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done

and what I had toiled to achieve,

everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;

nothing was gained under the sun.

Wisdom and Folly Are Meaningless

¹²Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom,
and also madness and folly.

What more can the king's successor do
than what has already been done?

¹³I saw that wisdom is better than folly,
just as light is better than darkness.

¹⁴The wise man has eyes in his head,
while the fool walks in the darkness;

but I came to realize

that the same fate overtakes them both.

^a8 The meaning of the Hebrew phrase is uncertain.

¹⁵Then I thought in my heart,

“The fate of the fool will overtake me also.

What then do I gain by being wise?”

I said in my heart,

“This too is meaningless.”

¹⁶For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered;

in days to come both will be forgotten.

Like the fool, the wise man too must die!

Toil Is Meaningless

¹⁷So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. ¹⁸I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. ¹⁹And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. ²⁰So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. ²¹For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. ²²What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? ²³All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

²⁴A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, ²⁵for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

²⁶To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

A Time for Everything

3 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:

- ² a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- ³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather
them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
- ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

⁹What does the worker gain from his toil? ¹⁰I have seen the burden God has laid on men. ¹¹He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. ¹³That every man may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God. ¹⁴I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it, so men will revere him.

¹⁵Whatever is has already been,
and what will be has been before;
and God will call the past to account.^a

¹⁶And I saw something else under the sun:

^a 15 Or God calls back the past

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

¹⁷I thought in my heart,

“God will bring to judgment
both the righteous and the wicked,
for there will be a time for every activity,
a time for every deed.”

¹⁸I also thought, “As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. ¹⁹Man’s fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath^a; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. ²⁰All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. ²¹Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?”^b

²²So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

Oppression, Toil, Friendlessness

4 Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun:

I saw the tears of the oppressed—
and they have no comforter;
power was on the side of their oppressors—
and they have no comforter.

²And I declared that the dead,
who had already died,
are happier than the living,
who are still alive.

³But better than both
is he who has not yet been,

^a ¹⁹ Or spirit

^b ²¹ Or Who knows the spirit of man, which rises upward, or the spirit of the animal, which goes down into the earth?”

who has not seen the evil
that is done under the sun.

⁴And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from
man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a
chasing after the wind.

⁵The fool folds his hands
and ruins himself.

⁶Better one handful with tranquillity
than two handfuls with toil
and chasing after the wind.

⁷Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

⁸There was a man all alone;
he had neither son nor brother.
There was no end to his toil,
yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
"For whom am I toiling," he asked,
"and why am I depriving myself of
enjoyment?"
This too is meaningless—
a miserable business!

⁹Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their
work:

¹⁰If one falls down,
his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!

¹¹Also, if two lie down together, they will keep
warm;
but how can one keep warm alone?

¹²Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Advancement Is Meaningless

¹³Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning. ¹⁴The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. ¹⁵I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor. ¹⁶There was no end to all the people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Stand in Awe of God

5 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

²Do not be quick with your mouth,
do not be hasty in your heart
to utter anything before God.
God is in heaven
and you are on earth,
so let your words be few.

³As a dream comes when there are many cares,
so the speech of a fool when there are many
words.

⁴When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. ⁵It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. ⁶Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God.

Riches Are Meaningless

⁸If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. ⁹The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.

¹⁰Whoever loves money never has money enough;
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with
his income.

This too is meaningless.

¹¹As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owner
except to feast his eyes on them?

¹²The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether he eats little or much,
but the abundance of a rich man
permits him no sleep.

¹³I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:

wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner,

¹⁴ or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when he has a son
there is nothing left for him.

¹⁵Naked a man comes from his mother's womb,
and as he comes, so he departs.
He takes nothing from his labor
that he can carry in his hand.

¹⁶This too is a grievous evil:

As a man comes, so he departs,
and what does he gain,
since he toils for the wind?

¹⁷All his days he eats in darkness,
with great frustration, affliction and anger.

¹⁸Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. ¹⁹Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. ²⁰He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.

6 I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men: ²God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

³A man may have a hundred children and live many years; yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity and does not receive proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ⁴It comes without meaning, it departs in darkness, and in darkness its name is shrouded. ⁵Though it never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man— ⁶even if he lives a thousand years twice over but fails to enjoy his prosperity. Do not all go to the same place?

⁷All man's efforts are for his mouth,
yet his appetite is never satisfied.

⁸What advantage has a wise man
over a fool?

What does a poor man gain
by knowing how to conduct himself before
others?

⁹Better what the eye sees
than the roving of the appetite.

This too is meaningless,
a chasing after the wind.

¹⁰Whatever exists has already been named,
and what man is has been known;
no man can contend

with one who is stronger than he.

- ¹¹The more the words,
the less the meaning;
and how does that profit anyone?

¹²For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?

Wisdom

7 A good name is better than fine perfume,
and the day of death better than the day of birth.

- ²It is better to go to a house of mourning
than to go to a house of feasting,
for death is the destiny of every man;
the living should take this to heart.

- ³Sorrow is better than laughter,
because a sad face is good for the heart.

- ⁴The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

- ⁵It is better to heed a wise man's rebuke
than to listen to the song of fools.

- ⁶Like the crackling of thorns under the pot,
so is the laughter of fools.
This too is meaningless.

- ⁷Extortion turns a wise man into a fool,
and a bribe corrupts the heart.

- ⁸The end of a matter is better than its beginning,
and patience is better than pride.

- ⁹Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit,
for anger resides in the lap of fools.

¹⁰Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?"

For it is not wise to ask such questions.

¹¹Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing
and benefits those who see the sun.

¹²Wisdom is a shelter
as money is a shelter,
but the advantage of knowledge is this:
that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.

¹³Consider what God has done:

Who can straighten
what he has made crooked?

¹⁴When times are good, be happy;
but when times are bad, consider:
God has made the one
as well as the other.

Therefore, a man cannot discover
anything about his future.

¹⁵In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these:

A righteous man perishing in his righteousness,
and a wicked man living long in his
wickedness.

¹⁶Do not be overrighteous,
neither be overwise—
why destroy yourself?

¹⁷Do not be overwicked,
and do not be a fool—
why die before your time?

¹⁸It is good to grasp the one
and not let go of the other.
The man who fears God will avoid all
extremes.^a

^a 18 Or *will follow them both*

¹⁹Wisdom makes one wise man more powerful
than ten rulers in a city.

²⁰There is not a righteous man on earth
who does what is right and never sins.

²¹Do not pay attention to every word people say,
or you may hear your servant cursing you—

²²for you know in your heart
that many times you yourself have cursed
others.

²³All this I tested by wisdom and I said,

“I am determined to be wise”—
but this was beyond me.

²⁴Whatever wisdom may be,
it is far off and most profound—
who can discover it?

²⁵So I turned my mind to understand,
to investigate and to search out wisdom and
the scheme of things
and to understand the stupidity of wickedness
and the madness of folly.

²⁶I find more bitter than death
the woman who is a snare,
whose heart is a trap,
and whose hands are chains.
The man who pleases God will escape her,
but the sinner she will ensnare.

²⁷“Look,” says the Teacher,^a “this is what I have discovered:

Adding one thing to another to discover the
scheme of things—

²⁸ while I was still searching
but not finding—

^a 27 Or the leader of the assembly

I found one upright man among a thousand,
but not one upright woman among them all.
²⁹This only have I found:
God made mankind upright,
but men have gone in search of many
schemes.”

8 Who is like the wise man?
Who knows the explanation of things?
Wisdom brightens a man’s face
and changes its hard appearance.

Obey the King

²Obey the king’s command, I say, because you took an oath
before God. ³Do not be in a hurry to leave the king’s presence.
Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he
pleases. ⁴Since a king’s word is supreme, who can say to him,
“What are you doing?”

⁵Whoever obeys his command will come to no
harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time
and procedure.

⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for
every matter,
though a man’s misery weighs heavily upon
him.

⁷Since no man knows the future,
who can tell him what is to come?

⁸No man has power over the wind to contain it^a;
so no one has power over the day of his death.
As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those who
practice it.

⁹All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done

^a 8 Or over his spirit to retain it

under the sun. There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own^a hurt. ¹⁰Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise^b in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

¹¹When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.

¹²Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. ¹³Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

¹⁴There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. ¹⁵So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun.

¹⁶When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth—his eyes not seeing sleep day or night—¹⁷then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.

A Common Destiny for All

9 So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him. ²All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad,^c the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

^a 9 Or to their ^b 10 Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Aquila; other Hebrew manuscripts they are forgotten ^c 2 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew does not have and the bad

As it is with the good man,
so with the sinner;
as it is with those who take oaths,
so with those who are afraid to take them.

³This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun:
The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover,
are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they
live, and afterwards they join the dead. ⁴Anyone who is
among the living has hope^a—even a live dog is better off
than a dead lion!

⁵For the living know that they will die,
but the dead know nothing;
they have no further reward,
and even the memory of them is forgotten.

⁶Their love, their hate
and their jealousy have long since vanished;
never again will they have a part
in anything that happens under the sun.

⁷Go, eat your food with gladness,
and drink your wine with a joyful heart,
for it is now that God favors what you do.

⁸Always be clothed in white,
and always anoint your head with oil.

⁹Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of
this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—
all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in
your toilsome labor under the sun. ¹⁰Whatever your hand
finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave,^b where
you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor
knowledge nor wisdom.

¹¹I have seen something else under the sun:

The race is not to the swift

^a ⁴ Ancient versions and many Hebrew manuscripts; other Hebrew manuscripts
What then is to be chosen? With all who live, there is hope ^b ¹⁰ Hebrew *Sheol*

or the battle to the strong,
 nor does food come to the wise
 or wealth to the brilliant
 or favor to the learned;
 but time and chance happen to them all.

¹²Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come:

As fish are caught in a cruel net,
 or birds are taken in a snare,
 so men are trapped by evil times
 that fall unexpectedly upon them.

Wisdom Better Than Folly

¹³I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me: ¹⁴There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it. ¹⁵Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. ¹⁶So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the poor man's wisdom was despised, and his words were not heeded.

¹⁷The quiet words of the wise are more to be
 heeded
 than the shouts of a ruler of fools.
¹⁸Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
 but one sinner destroys much good.

10 As dead flies give perfume a bad smell,
 so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

²The heart of the wise inclines to the right,
 but the heart of the fool to the left.

³Even as he walks along the road,
 the fool lacks sense
 and shows everyone how stupid he is.

⁴If a ruler's anger rises against you,
 do not leave your post;

calmness can lay great errors to rest.

⁵There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
the sort of error that arises from a ruler:

⁶Fools are put in many high positions,
while the rich occupy the low ones.

⁷I have seen slaves on horseback,
while princes go on foot like slaves.

⁸Whoever digs a pit may fall into it;
whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten
by a snake.

⁹Whoever quarries stones may be injured by
them;
whoever splits logs may be endangered by
them.

¹⁰If the axe is dull
and its edge unsharpened,
more strength is needed
but skill will bring success.

¹¹If a snake bites before it is charmed,
there is no profit for the charmer.

¹²Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious,
but a fool is consumed by his own lips.

¹³At the beginning his words are folly;
at the end they are wicked madness—

¹⁴and the fool multiplies words.

No one knows what is coming;
who can tell him what will happen after him?

¹⁵A fool's work wearies him;
he does not know the way to town.

¹⁶Woe to you, O land, whose king was a servant,^a
and whose princes feast in the morning.

^a 16 Or *king is a child*

¹⁷Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of noble birth,
 whose princes eat at a proper time—
 for strength and not for drunkenness.

¹⁸If a man is lazy, the rafters sag;
 if his hands are idle, the house leaks.

¹⁹A feast is made for laughter,
 and wine makes life merry,
 but money is the answer for everything.

²⁰Do not revile the king even in your thoughts,
 nor curse the rich in your bedroom,
 because a bird of the air may carry your words,
 and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

Bread Upon the Waters

11 Cast your bread upon the waters,
 for after many days you will find it again.

²Give portions to seven, yes to eight,
 for you do not know what disaster may come
 upon the land.

³If clouds are full of water,
 they pour rain upon the earth.
 Whether a tree falls to the south or to the
 north,
 in the place where it falls, there will it lie.

⁴Whoever watches the wind will not plant;
 whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

⁵As you do not know the path of the wind,
 or how the body is formed in a mother's
 womb,
 so you cannot understand the work of God,
 the Maker of all things.

⁶Sow your seed in the morning,
and at evening let not your hands be idle,
for you do not know which will succeed,
whether this or that,
or whether both will do equally well.

Remember Your Creator While Young

⁷Light is sweet,
and it pleases the eyes to see the sun.

⁸However many years a man may live,
let him enjoy them all.
But let him remember the days of darkness,
for they will be many.
Everything to come is meaningless.

⁹Be happy, young man, while you are young,
and let your heart give you joy in the days of
your youth.

Follow the ways of your heart
and whatever your eyes see,
but know that for all these things
God will bring you to judgment.

¹⁰So then, banish anxiety from your heart
and cast off the troubles of your body,
for youth and vigor are meaningless.

12 Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come,
and the years approach when you will say,
“I find no pleasure in them”—
²before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;
³when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they are few,

and those looking through the windows grow
dim;

⁴when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when men rise up at the sound of birds,
but all their songs grow faint;
⁵when men are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms,
the grasshopper drags himself along,
and desire no longer is stirred.
Then man goes to his eternal home
and mourners go about the streets.

⁶Remember him—before the silver cord is
severed,^a
or the golden bowl is broken;
before the pitcher is shattered at the spring,
or the wheel broken at the well,
⁷and the dust returns to the ground it came from,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

⁸“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher.^b
“Everything is meaningless!”

The Conclusion of the Matter

⁹Not only was the Teacher^b wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰The Teacher^b searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

¹¹The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd.
¹²Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.

^a 6 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew is removed
of the assembly

^b 8, 9, 10 Or the leader

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

- ¹³Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments
for this is the whole duty of man.
- ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.